



newsletter

AIDS NETWORK OF EDMONTON

May 29, 1987

Volume 2 No. 5



MOSQUITOS ?

Q: Can insects such as mosquitos carry the AIDS virus?

A: No. Insects such as mosquitos do not transmit AIDS. Mosquitos only spread diseases that use the insect as part of the disease's life-cycle. Malaria, for instance, has to spend part of its life in an anopheles mosquito in order to mature, before the mosquito can spread the disease.

However, bloodborne diseases such as syphilis, hepatitis and AIDS are not spread by biting insects.

Also, mosquitos don't go immediately from person to person. A mosquito will usually bite and feed about once every 48 hours. Even if the virus were there, it would be in minute quantities and would die before the next bite.

If mosquitos were transmitting AIDS, we would see many more cases of AIDS in those parts of the world where mosquitos are most common, and in all age/sex categories in their countries, not just young adults.

Reprinted from: AIDS: What Every Responsible Canadian Should Know by James D. Greig
(Toronto Sun Publishing, Toronto)
1987, p. 37.

CO-ORDINATOR of VOLUNTEERS HIRED !

The AIDS NETWORK is pleased to welcome to its staff BRIGITTE MCKENZIE, in the position of Co-ordinator of Volunteers. Brigitte comes to the NETWORK with a degree in Psychology and 10 years of experience in a variety of counselling situations in Calgary, Victoria, and more recently, Edmonton. She has worked in professional and volunteer capacities with adults and with adolescents, doing grief counselling, and working with a hospice in Victoria, at the Edmonton General Hospital and the Cross Cancer Clinic. Brigitte's open, friendly manner, and her training and experience ensure that she will be a valuable asset to the AIDS NETWORK and to the people that it serves.

THIRD YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Well, this month marks three years since my diagnosis. What is it like to be alive three years after being told that I have AIDS? Since I haven't been dead yet for three years, it's hard to make a comparison (sorry, all my emotional and spiritual growth hasn't changed my warped sense of humour).

Death seems to be one of the major issues facing us in regard to our condition; and while I no longer view it as "negative", it certainly wasn't a welcome thought when I was diagnosed. Though after the initial shock wore off I had to admit there was a certain irony to the situation. About a year before diagnosis I had finally come out of a prolonged midlife crisis (upon reflection, I must admit my life seems to have been a series of existential crises), a time of feeling powerless, depressed and all those other wonderful dramatic scenarios. So when I received the news, I thought, why now, why not a year ago when I might have appreciated it? And then I thought, oh shit, have I sabotaged myself again? Because

if I have, I've really done it this time. So there I was, looking at my death; it seemed pretty inevitable, the whole issue of AIDS seemed (and still seems) to be surrounded by doom and gloom, especially by the medical establishment. Could a condition of this magnitude really be nature's way of telling me to drop dead? Anyway, I decided no it wasn't (no one has ever accused me of being agreeable). I decided that yes, with my past history I was responsible for my condition, and that yes, I could do something about it, and that even if I died from this (and I am going to die sometime anyway, and so are you, dear reader), I would live fully in the time I had. Which sounds noble (or stupid depending on how you look at it). I was lucky in that I had for some time been living a lifestyle in which attempting to live by spiritual principles was an important facet. I realized I had to put my money where my mouth was; for instance if I really believed I was being cared for by a Higher Power, I had to assume this experience would benefit me and it would be for the best no matter what happened.

One could say (and many have) that I have a positive attitude, which is true (most of the time); "positive attitude" is a catchword (catchwords?) that people seem to use all the time as if it's a magical incantation. I found it took (and takes) a lot of effort to develop and maintain positivity. Now I know that my having survived for three years makes me exceptional (so far; I don't think it will be that unusual in the near future), and I wish the experience meant I had lots of answers for others seeking to do the same. Well, I don't think I have anything unique. I do think I have some things in common with other long term survivors of AIDS and other illnesses, notably cancer. Like them, I feel responsible for my life and health and am actively doing something about them in a holistic sense, that is mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. More specifically, I do a lot of meditation and visualization, and have taken courses and workshops in related areas. I feel that this has been the most help to me, but then, I felt in my case the emotional component is the biggest factor in my health. Nutritionally I've cut down on fats, sugars and salt, and I don't drink alcohol or caffeine; other than that, I have not done any special diets. I must admit I'm a bit more open-minded when I consider special diets now; when

I was first diagnosed, I looked at macrobiotics and thought maybe I would rather die. I take the usual vitamins and supplements, nothing elaborate. I exercise, do weights and lots of walking. Along the way I've also done (or had done) reiki, massage therapy, psychic healing, hypnotherapy, etc. Another very important thing for me has been my belonging to support groups, among them the P.W.A. Coalition; for me it's another case of putting my money where my mouth is; if I believe it's a good idea to have a support group, and if I want that support, I have to get involved. You know, after I made that decision that I wanted to live, it seemed that I received a lot of support in that decision.

People brought me positive articles, or talked about their own experience with life-threatening illnesses; most of all they cared about me. I have personally never experienced rejection because of AIDS. What I have experienced is a lot of love. That's an overused word, but it's the only one that seems to fit. A while ago, I was talking to an acquaintance whom I had not seen since diagnosis. In the course of our conversation I mentioned that for me, these have been the best years of my life, she said "I don't think you're supposed to feel that way". Which made me think of how we choose our experience. Mine has been good. So here I am after three years, I still haven't been hospitalized or had any other secondary infections; if it weren't for the fact that the occasional new lesion still appears, I would be in excellent physical health. Emotionally I feel better than I ever have before; I feel good about myself and about life. I feel as if every day is a gift (and it is, isn't it?). I know that I am loved and that I love. I consider myself very fortunate.

Taavi

Reprinted from the Vancouver P.W.A. Coalition Newsletter, # 8, May, 1987



SUPPORT GROUPS

HIV Positive Persons

Recently a support group for persons with positive HIV antibody test results has begun to meet. This group will meet twice monthly on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. The purpose of this group will be to provide a supportive environment for discussion of issues related to HIV positive testing. People who would benefit from this group are those people testing HIV positive and their boyfriends, girlfriends, and spouses. This is not a therapy group but rather will provide an environment that will facilitate discussion, peer support, positive-health education and information sharing. Confidentiality is important and expected from all members. For more information, or to talk, please call Matt or Tom at the NETWORK office (424-4767).

Persons with ARC

This support group continues to meet every second Thursday, for all persons with health problems caused by HIV. Meetings take place away from the NETWORK office, in a private place. Confidentiality is very important to the functioning of the group, and is stressed. The group hopes to encourage mutual support for members by meeting to discuss common concerns, and to invite methods for overcoming obstacles. Anyone who has ARC is invited to phone the NETWORK office (424-4767) for more information, or even just to talk on a one-to-one basis. Please ask for Tom or Lorraine.

Persons with AIDS

This support group continues to meet once a week, with many members. The meetings have provided their participants with the opportunity to support each other and relax with others who understand. Anyone with AIDS interested in joining the group or in talking to someone is invited to call the NETWORK office (424-4767). Please ask for Tom or Lorraine.



Friends, Families, Lovers

This support group continues to meet every other week. Anyone who has a family member, friend, or lover with AIDS or ARC is invited to join. Hopefully the time together will provide the opportunity to find support together. Then it becomes easier to continue to give support to the person directly affected by AIDS/ARC. If the loved one has died, support becomes very important. Please call the NETWORK office (424-4767) for more information. Ask for Lorraine or Tom.

MEETING DATE FOR SUPPORT GROUPS

HIV Positive Persons

June 10
June 25
July 9

People with ARC

June 4
June 18
July 2

Friends, Family, Lovers

June 3
June 17

MOVIES: A Virus Respects No Morals

June 17
9:30 p.m. (one show only)
at the Princess Theatre

This West German black comedy about AIDS uses humour as an act of furious provocation flaunting surrealistic characters in bizarre situations to demand attention and jar people out of their complacency.

1986
82 Minutes
German with English subtitles
Classification to be announced

network news

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Volunteer In-Service

June 1, 1987

7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

St. Stephen's College, U of A.

A chance to meet Brigitte, the new Volunteer Coordinator, and to discuss concerns in the various areas of work.

"Getting Started" Massage Workshop

June 6, 1987

9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Room 202, Grant MacEwan College

Cromdale Campus - 8020 - 118 Avenue

Facilitators David Bergmark and Karen Rembish will lead volunteers and staff through a day of rejuvenation using outer and inner sensation.

"New" Volunteers"

Anyone interested in signing up for the fall training session for volunteers, please contact the NETWORK as soon as possible.

Volunteer Hours

In the past month, the NETWORK has benefited from the following volunteer services:

Number of volunteers - 14

Total No. of hours worked - 177½ hours

Type of work done -

Office - 34½ hours

Phone Line - 115 hours

Speakers' Bureau - 9 hours

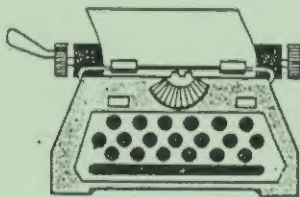
Other - 19 hours

Many thanks to these devoted people !

BOOK LIST

The AIDS NETWORK has recently received a number of new books which tell the story of individuals and their struggle with AIDS. Such books are available on loan to members of the AIDS NETWORK, volunteers, or clients. Titles include:

1. The Screaming Room, Barbara Peabody (Oak Tree, San Diego) 1986.
The true story of a mother's struggle to find meaning in her son's illness with AIDS, to assist in caring for him, and ultimately to cope with his death.
2. Good-bye, I love you, Carol Lynn Pearson (Random House, New York) 1986.
The true story of a woman's struggle to reconcile her Mormon faith with her love for her husband in the face of the disclosure of his homosexuality and his long suffering and death from AIDS.
3. Twelve Weeks in Spring, June Callwood (Lester & Arpen Dennys, Toronto) 1986.
The true story of June Callwood's love and care for her friend dying of cancer, and, how she and others used their skill and insights from this to help the growing number of persons with AIDS in Toronto.
4. The Normal Heart, Larry Kramer (New American Library, New York) 1985.
A play based on the story of Larry Kramer's fight to make politicians and his gay friends aware of the seriousness of a new disease affecting gay men, and his efforts to establish the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York.



DONATIONS RECEIVED:

The AIDS NETWORK gratefully acknowledges the following significant donations from these generous donors:

Boots "n" Saddle and Swizzlesticks Hair Co.
\$741.75 (from May 10 Sunday Shopping)

Vocal Minority - \$600.00

An anonymous individual - \$200.00

The Knights of Columbus - \$100.00
Many thanks to these people for their financial support of our work.

WHAT WAS SAID

"The epidemic of AIDS is not a media event. It is not an event that is being manufactured by the press to get headlines. It is not something people in capitals of countries are talking about in order to detract from more world-shaking issues. It is the health crisis of the century, the most important health-care issue we probably will ever face. One truly has to look back into history very far to find a disease, a medical problem, that is so devastating and so frightening."—Dr. Larry Siegel, who operates an AIDS, alcohol and drug addiction clinic in Key West, Fla., offered this observation at the second western conference on alcoholism and other drug dependencies in Vancouver.

-- from THE MEDICAL POST,
May 5/87

WIZARD OF OZ SPOOF GETS AIDS MESSAGE ACROSS TO STUDENTS

Giant condom foils Witch hunt

IOWA CITY, Iowa (UPI) — University of Iowa students this week opened their production of *The Wizard of AIDS*, a play in which a heroine named Dorothy kills the Wicked Witch of Unsafe Sex with a giant condom.

The 25-minute play, performed Wednesday on the UI campus, was adapted from the popular motion picture *The Wizard of Oz* as a tool to "teach people about the

importance of safe sex," said director Michael Barto.

"All the brochures and seminars are very well and good, but they weren't reaching the audience that needs to be reached — namely, young people," said Barto.

The play is about a girl named Dorothy who plans to run away from home with her dog, Toto, to search for a cure for acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

A tornado strikes and Dorothy's house lands on and

kills a wicked witch who spreads AIDS by sharing intravenous needles during drug use. Along the way, she meets the scarecrow, the tin man and the cowardly lion, all of whom have been touched in some way by AIDS.

Dorothy eventually suffocates the Wicked Witch with a giant condom. At play's end, safe-sex literature and condoms are passed out to the audience.

Reprinted from: The Edmonton Sun, May 15, 1987
p.35

WORKSHOP

LIFE, DEATH AND TRANSITION WORKSHOP

A five date intensive life, death and transition workshop that will be attended by Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross will take place in Edmonton, August 31st to September 4th, 1987. Individuals wishing more information or application forms should contact Lorraine at the NETWORK office.

"NOTICE"

The AIDS NETWORK still requires a desk and book case for our new Co-ordinator of Volunteers position. If you are spring cleaning or know someone that they would be able to donate please consider us. A financial donation given to the NETWORK towards purchase of used furniture would also be greatly appreciated. A charitable donation for Income Tax purposes will be mailed to you. Your help will be greatly appreciated. We gratefully acknowledge the donation of a filing cabinet from Dr. M. Lussier and chairs from National Pagette Ltd.

ROSS ARMSTRONG Memorial Fund

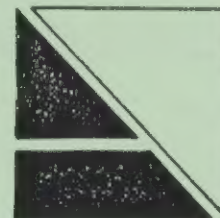
Ross Armstrong Trust Fund

Update:	May 25, 1987
Total Income:	\$4,297.54
Total Awards:	\$2,008.22
Balance:	\$2,289.32

The Fund uses monies donated or raised directly to assist persons with AIDS or ARC.

Office Address:

10233 - 98 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5J 0M7



Telephone Number:

Info Line: 429-AIDS
Business Line: 424-4767

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Information Line Hours:

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

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Articles are usually prepared by NETWORK staff and/or the source acknowledged when reprinted.

**AIDS INFORMATION
LINE NOW OPEN**
MON.-FRI. 9am.-9pm.
429-(AIDS)

Become a voice in the AIDS NETWORK.

Your input will help to shape our educational.

Counselling and public awareness programs.

Your financial support will help to carry them out.



Ross Armstrong Office, 10233 - 98 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0M7
(403) 424-4767

AIDS NETWORK OF EDMONTON

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

A \$25⁰⁰ membership entitles the undersigned to discount admission at specified AIDS NETWORK events, regular newsletter mailings, and the right to vote at AIDS NETWORK meetings.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please notify the AIDS NETWORK if your address changes.

Please enquire about the reduced membership rates for students or the unemployed.